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CRITICAL NOTICES.

OLD TESTAMENT LITERATURE.

THE volumes which fall to be reviewed in this notice afford a fair example of the kind of work which is being done year by year in the various branches of Old Testament study. Clearly, the study of the text and its interpretation underlies all other research, and without more ado we may begin with the new edition of the Hebrew text by Prof. Kittel of Leipzig, with the collaboration of such well-known names as Beer, Buhl, Dalman, Driver, Löhr, Nowack, Rothstein, and Ryssel¹. It consists of the Massoretic Text with a judicious selection of variant readings from Hebrew MSS. and the versions, and a number of the more necessary emendations. A work of this kind is a distinct advance upon the ordinary Hebrew Bible, and deserves to be universally welcomed. Ginsburg's *Massoretico-Critical Text* was a step in this direction, but the greater fullness of detail gives Kittel's work the superiority. The names of his collaborators are a guarantee that the treatment of the text will be moderate; it was not purposed to deal so thoroughly with it as do the *Sacred Books of the Old Testament*, for example, where every writer has reconstructed the text according to that which is good in his own eyes. Recognizing that the ordinary editions with their scanty selection of marginal notes are an insufficient guide to put into the hands of the average student, Prof. Kittel's aim has been to provide just enough critical apparatus to enable the reader to use his Hebrew Bible intelligently. In some important particulars the editor has refrained from following innovations which are familiar to those who have used Baer and Delitzsch², and in this the work will doubtless commend itself to the majority. To Prof. Driver has been entrusted the preparation of Deuteronomy and Joshua, to Prof. Ryssel, Exodus-Numbers, whilst the editor is responsible for the remaining books, and has also had a share in

¹ *Biblia Hebraica*, ed. Rud. Kittel, Pt. I, Genesis-Kings, Leipzig, Hinrichs, 4 marks. See the editor's essay: *Ueber die Nothwendigkeit und Möglichkeit einer neuen Ausgabe der hebräischen Bibel*.

² Cf. T. C. Foote, "Some unwarranted innovations in the text of the Hebrew Bible," *Johns Hopkins University Circulars*, xxii, no. 163 (1903, July), pp. 71 sqq.

Exodus and Numbers. An inspection of a number of select passages has satisfied us that the notes have been prepared with the requisite care and discrimination. Of course it is easy to cavil at the omissions, but the text's value lies in what it gives, and not in what it omits, and obviously it was never intended to make the work a completely critical edition of the text. This would have required an elaborate commentary on every page, and would at once have put it out of the reach of the ordinary student. As it is, the book is well printed, reasonable in price, and should find immediate use in every Hebrew class. Prof. Kittel and his co-workers are to be congratulated upon the result, and one may now begin to hope that some day an enterprising publisher will see his way to furnish one of the greatest wants in Hebrew studies—the publication of separate books of the Hebrew text with brief notes and vocabulary¹.

Kittel's edition, therefore, lays the foundation, and the "keen" student will interleave his copy in order to incorporate additional notes as he goes along. What will be made of the text of Hosea and Amos when the concluding volume appears next year the future will show, though we may be sure that the beginner will find in it sufficient for his wants. But to get to the bottom of the text, and to endeavour to understand the messages of these prophets, recourse must be had to the commentaries, and here the new volume of the *International Critical Commentary* series deserves something more than mere passing mention. Prof. W. R. Harper's *Amos and Hosea*², like the other volumes of this great series, is encyclopaedic. It is the sixth of the Old Testament volumes, and is distinguished from the rest by a marked originality of treatment. The commentary itself is exhaustive, nearly 420 pages in all. Questions of literary analysis, metre, and text are handled with fullness, and the arrangement of the material with divisions, subdivisions, and the relegation of subsidiary or technical matter to smaller type renders it more practicable to purely English readers. Everything that has been written upon Amos and Hosea has been carefully noticed, though not always weighed, and one can only express one's wonder at the immense pains which the author has taken to make the work complete. He appears to have overlooked nothing helpful, and the many references and illustrative points of detail reveal the width of his reading in every branch of Semitic study. In fact, so much solid material has been collected here that we are constrained to wish that his Indexes, though welcome enough, had been more complete. This volume forms the introduction

¹ Joh. Bachmann's *Präparationen zu den kleinen Propheten* (Berlin) is the only recent work of the kind that we have seen.

² T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 12s.

to the author's work on the rest of the Minor Prophets which are to appear in two volumes, and he has taken the opportunity of preparing a summary of the prophetic movements previous to the time of Amos and Hosea. This sketch occupies a hundred out of 180 pages of the Introduction, and is an extremely valuable monograph, for which we are particularly indebted to the author. It is very clear, and is to be commended to the earnest consideration of all readers. If it does not everywhere command the assent of those who study it, let it be remembered that when once one leaves the beaten track there are many paths which can be taken, and the discovery of the right one is the earnest object of all followers after truth.

This study of special topics is represented by two books in our *olla podrida*, one the elaboration of a new theory, the other a critical study of current theories. Mr. Thirtle's investigation of the headings of the Psalms¹ proposes a novel explanation of these much-debated curiosities, which has the great merit of simplicity. In Hab. iii we find a Psalm which stands by itself, is quite independent of the preceding chapter, and thus proclaims itself as a model or standard. It opens with a statement of its class (a prayer) and author, and closes with what is exclusively a musical note. This has suggested to Mr. Thirtle that there has been a displacement of headings and titles in the Psalter, so that "the chief musician," who really should be named at the conclusion of a Psalm (as in Hab. iii), has been placed at the beginning of the Psalm which follows. This alleged error naturally must have arisen after the original procedure had been forgotten, and is intelligible when one remembers that primarily there were no divisions between chapters or psalms. Thus, in Ps. lxxxviii, "Maschil of Heman the Ezrahite" rightly belongs here, but all that precedes is the subscription to Ps. lxxxvii. Again, in Ps. lvi, "Jonath Elem Rehokim" (? the dove of the distant terebinths) connects itself with Ps. lv. 6-7, and according to this new theory belongs really to the end of that Psalm; the words that follow (a Psalm of David, Michtam) naturally remain as the heading to Ps. lvi. Thence the author proceeds to study the meanings of the terms which have so long baffled scholars. He commences with *Shoshannim* and *Gittith*, which suggest lilies and the wine-press, the flowers of spring and the autumn vintage, and—according to him—symbolize the two great feasts, Passover and Tabernacles. He finds, therefore, in Ps. lxviii and xlv, which *ex hypothesi* concluded with *Shoshannim*, two characteristic Psalms for the Feast of Passover, whilst Pss. vii, lxxx, lxxxiii (with *Gittith*) are held to be equally

¹ *The Titles of the Psalms, their nature and meaning explained*, by J. W. Thirtle, 2nd ed., Frowde, Glasgow, 6s.

suitable for the Feast of Tabernacles. As, too, the Feast of Weeks is traditionally associated with the giving of the Law or Testimony (*Eduth*), its nearness to the Passover will account for the symbolical *Shushan* (*Shoshannim*)-*Eduth* applied to Pss. lix, lxxix. These, observes Mr. Thirtle, "while reflecting conditions suggestive of Pentecost, speak of a time when festivity was under eclipse. In fact, Israel was driven, by the terms of these Psalms, to pray to God for just such blessings as the Feast memorialized in the old-time life of the nation."

That "the place of David in the Psalter is not a question to be settled by criticism alone" is one of his conclusions, and it is argued that it is at least certain that the titles prove that his place in Psalmody was second to none. These are discussed at length, and we find, for example, Ps. viii ascribed to Goliath's death on the strength of the doubtful *Muth-labben*. One has only to turn to Kittel's edition, to see that אִישׁ הַבָּנִים (1 Sam. xvii. 4, 23) is extremely uncertain, and on the analogy of Ps. lii one expects the circumstances of the composition of the Psalm to stand at the beginning. *Mahalath* is taken to refer to rejoicings, dancing (*mēhōlōth*), whether over the death of Goliath (Ps. lii) or on the occasion of the bearing of the ark (Ps. lxxxvii). One other novelty may be mentioned. Selah is held to be merely a note to mark the commencement of a new division, to indicate the beginning of a new stanza. True, four times it comes at the end of a Psalm, but in iii, xxiv, xlvii the Septuagint omits, and if it stands after ix, the fact remains that the version unites ix and x as one Psalm. We have said enough to show the object of this little book, which has now reached a second edition. It is clearly one which must be left to speak for itself, and already Orientalists of world-wide fame, we are told, have congratulated the author on his discovery of the key to the mystery of the Psalm titles.

Another special problem upon the solution of which a great deal of ingenuity has been expended is the character of Hebrew metre. Mr. Cobb's discussion¹ owes its inception to a prize offered by Mr. C. G. Montefiore for the best treatment of this much-debated subject, and our thanks are due to him in very special measure that the successful essay has been published. Here we have no special pleading, no new theory to promulgate, but a careful criticism of all the systems of Hebrew metre that have been launched. No English system has appeared since the days of Lowth, and the worthy bishop held that all possible solutions had been proposed and that no one system was practicable. Looking back over the 150 years which have elapsed, we are confronted with a lengthy series of names of workers who

¹ *A Criticism of Systems of Hebrew Metre*, by W. H. Cobb. The Clarendon Press, 6s.

have devoted themselves to the problem, and still no system has been unanimously accepted. Bellermann, Ewald, Ernst Meier of Tübingen, Budde, Bickell, D. H. Müller, Herbert Grimme, Ed. Sievers, and many others, have each in turn pursued the elusive solution, and the average reader who sought to ascertain for himself the relative merits of each theory would doubtless speedily lose himself in a labyrinth of anapaests and syllables, of morae and strophes. We are extremely indebted, therefore, to Dr. Cobb for his patience in mastering the work of a century and a half, for the lucidity with which he sets before us the essential features of each system, and for the keen criticism he has brought to bear upon their defects. He has aimed at a careful induction of the accessible facts, a sound deduction of all the principles which are involved, and an independent and unprejudiced application of these principles to the theories which he has investigated. "Every theory," he observes, "accounts for some facts; a plausible theory accounts for most of the facts: the true theory, when found, will take in all of the facts naturally; hence it is to be reached by a positive rather than a negative process."

It is a meritorious feature of the treatise that the author has no theory of his own to hammer into us; he has less occasion to labour to prove the errors of others, and his whole attention is directed to a keen search after facts. He asks his readers to know only three things: Hebrew (only a little knowledge is required), English, and *poetry*, and if we italicize the last, it is lest some should forget that Hebrew literature after all was a living literature. Further, it is characteristic of the author that he has ignored the Assyrian parallels noted by Gunkel, Delitzsch, Zimmern, and others, for the very excellent reason that if the Assyriologists have made out their case it would predispose us to expect something similar in Hebrew. Mr. Cobb's criticisms of the problems of Hebrew poetry do not include any solution of his own, but he has reached important conclusions: the distinction between rhythm and metre must be given up, a combination of the results of Grimme and Sievers is to be desired. "On the one hand, a profound acquaintance with general philology; on the other, with Semitic philology. The one side would consent to sacrifice its exclusive anapaests, the other its cherished morae. . . . If some genuinely mediating investigator could bring the two schools into harmony, he would inherit the blessing pronounced on the peacemakers."

Lastly, we come to the work of literary criticism which has to be built up on the study of the Hebrew text, its interpretation, and the investigation of a multitude of special questions. Prof. C. F. Kent is best known, perhaps, for his *History of the Hebrew People*, a scholarly,

non-technical, and well-written study covering the whole of the Old Testament period. During the eight years or so that have elapsed since that was first written, he has made further efforts in the same direction, and proposes to publish the Old Testament and the Apocrypha in English, with its contents arranged logically and chronologically. Two volumes have now appeared¹, and suffice to show that the work bids fair to be absolutely one of the most useful of its kind. A useful feature of Prof. Kent's edition is the method of classification which he has adopted. There is no book like the Old Testament which requires so many aids to its understanding. "Logical classification," as he remarks, "is distinctly the gift of the Aryan rather than of the Semite. Without exception, the literary products of the East, and especially of the Semitic world, are conspicuously lacking in systematic arrangement. The Koran, for example, is a medley of commands, stories, prayers, and exhortations. To this general rule the Old Testament is no exception." So, in the first place he has aimed at presenting a systematic classification of the various subjects. Here we have tradition, history, and biography. Vol. III will contain prophetic sermons, epistles, and apocalypses; vol. IV, laws and traditional precedents; vol. V, songs, psalms, and prayers; and the series will conclude with vol. VI, proverbs and didactic poems. As already mentioned, the writings of the Apocrypha are laid under contribution; the historical records, for example, would indeed be incomplete if the First and Second Book of the Maccabees were ignored. But to render the classification chronological as well as logical, effect must be given to the results of literary criticism, and these must be presented in a form that will admit of their being intelligible to the general body of students; for the destructive stage has been succeeded by the constructive, and there are many problems that invite the attention of the general students of history, literature, and science. For these, however, everything must be complete, concise, and clear, and it is characteristic of the author's thoroughness that he has prepared a new translation of the Hebrew, indicating where necessary the variants or emendations which he has preferred to follow. To represent at a glance the analysis of the narratives Prof. Kent has adopted a plan of his own. In the *Documents of the Hexateuch*, it will be remembered, the Rev. W. E. Addis printed separately the portions ascribed respectively to JE, D, and P. In Haupt's *Sacred Books of the Old Testament*, the

¹ *The Student's Old Testament*, vol. I, "Narratives of the Beginnings of Hebrew History from the Creation to the establishment of the Hebrew Kingdom" (1904); vol. II, "Israel's Historical and Biographical Narratives" (1905), London, Hodder & Stoughton.

various strands are indicated by colours. The editors of the Oxford *Hexateuch* employed an ingenious scheme whereby the whole of a narrative or its constituent parts could be read apart. Advantages and drawbacks to each can be easily found, although the Oxford *Hexateuch* is probably best for the ordinary reader. For the furtherance of his object, Kent has grouped together parallel or related records side by side, so that the growth of any given tradition or law can be readily traced. This has a distinct advantage in the case of actual parallels; the three stories of the deception regarding Sarah and Rebekah (Gen. xii, xx, xxvi) appear on one page, similarly the two stories of David's magnanimity towards Saul (1 Sam. xxiv, xxvi), the twofold account of the capture of Jericho (Joshua v and vi), and so on. But, on the other hand, this system is apt to require too confident a decision in ascribing verses of doubtful origin, or which are due to redaction, and by removing passages from their present context it is difficult to grasp the character of each separate source as a whole, or to follow chapter by chapter the methods of successive redactors to supplement or supplant the older material which lay before them. This scheme, with all its merits, illustrates the growth of tradition, but not the growth of the literary material to its present form. Space forbids us to enter more deeply into these volumes. Tables show the stages and approximate dates of the literature, the contents and the classification of the narratives. Indexes of Biblical passages render reference easy. Numerous maps illustrate the geography of special periods. A copious Introduction to each volume deals adequately with the general questions. Appendices furnish bibliographical details and miscellaneous information, including side-lights from the historical and mythological inscriptions, weights and measures, names of months, &c. The footnotes deal with textual questions in brief and with the literary analysis at greater length. Properly enough, care is taken to give the grounds upon which the analysis has proceeded, and the treatment is marked on the whole with fairness. Here, of course, there is room for criticism, since there must always be differences of opinion over this complicated subject. Frequently it is impossible to determine the sources of a narrative whose composite character is admitted, and the work of analysis is one of extreme complexity. In some of these cases one is inclined to believe that the traditions were already composite in the oral stage, and that the ancient Hebrew, like the modern Bedouin, paid little heed to inconsistencies and contradictions which he heard and read¹. We may just notice Prof. Kent's view of the date

¹ As an example may be cited the story of Zir, a favourite tale with the natives of Palestine, which in one form is composite. The hero on his

of the book of Ruth. In opposition to the majority of critics (Driver and a few others excepted) he rejects the post-exilic date of the book. He regards it as certainly older than the exile, but admits that it has been recovered and touched up at a late date by editors who found therein a justification of marriage with foreigners. The "Bethlehem Cycle of Stories" in which he includes it, numbers also Judges xvii-xxi, which, as we know, were appended to the Book of Judges in all probability in post-exilic times. How the old story of Gibeah was treated (xix-xxi) any commentary or introduction will amply show; it is a fortunate circumstance that the idyllic story of Ruth was less severely handled.

It might have been interesting, perhaps, to test Prof. Harper's treatment of the metre of Amos and Hosea in the light of Dr. Cobb's criticisms, or to compare the text-critical standpoint of Prof. Kent with Prof. Kittel's edition of the Massoretic text; but we have already exceeded our limits. Each represents an advance, typical of the gradual progress of Biblical studies, and we may apply to them what the old divines said of their translation in the Preface to the Authorized Version:—

"As nothing is begun and perfected at the same time, and the latter thoughts are thought to be the wiser; so if we building upon their foundation that went before us, and being holpen by their labours, do endeavour to make that better which they left so good; no man, we are sure, hath cause to mislike us; they, we persuade ourselves, if they were alive, would thank us."

STANLEY A. COOK.

ON THE BIBLICAL EXEGESIS OF JOSEPH IBN KASPI.

ISAAC LAST, משנה כסף, Weitere zwei Schriften des R. Joseph ibn Kaspi. Erstes Heft., Pressburg, 1905. x+176 pp., 8vo.

IN the well-known list of his works, Joseph ibn Kaspi places at the head the one entitled טירת הכסף (Canticles viii. 9). He thus return from abroad finds that his sister-in-law has married the murderer of his brother, so he avenges his brother's death by killing the relations of the second husband (who himself is dead). Later, he finds his nephew, his brother's own son, and the two turn upon those who had murdered the father and put them all to death. The point is that the whole story, with the twofold account of the vengeance, was taken down from the lips of Sinaitic Bedouin. The complete story as heard by Mr. Jennings-Bramley will be printed in his article on the Sinaitic Bedouin, Part vii, in an early number of the *Pal. Explor. Fund, Quarterly Statement*.